

# Supporting and Inhibiting Aspects of the Students' Learning Concentration and Academic Achievement

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# Supporting and Inhibiting Aspects of the Students' Learning Concentration and Academic Achievement

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**Abstract**—This study aims to explain aspects that can support and inhibit the students' learning concentration and academic achievement. Motivation is the driving force that enables a person to do what is desired. In learning and achieving academic goals, motivation is an instrumental element that elicits the students' eagerness in learning and completing academic tasks. This research employs quantitative descriptive method, by using data cluster random sampling technique. The subjects of this research are the students of Faculty of Psychology of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang who are taking the last semester of their study. Data were taken by using interview method. The data obtained in this study were analyzed by using descriptive statistical techniques. The results of this study reveals that the aspects supporting the students' learning concentration and academic achievement are: supports from the closest people, parental supports, goals and targets in the future, curiosity, interesting content of lecture, type of the course, the lecturer, self psychological condition, classroom atmosphere, home atmosphere, and belief in God. On the other hand, the aspects inhibiting the students' learning concentration and academic achievement can be more identified than the supporting ones. The inhibiting aspects are: self-condition (such as, laziness and procrastination), students' non-academic activities (such as, organizations and internships); unclear procedures of course implementation, homesickness, social media, lack of proper reading habit, interpersonal relationships with friends and boyfriends or girlfriends, self psychological condition, time management problems, overwhelming tasks, and transportation problems.

**Keywords**—*motivation, academic achievement, learning concentration*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is the end result that students get after a series of learning process. Suryabrata (2002, cited in Maslihah, 2012) stated that academic achievement is all achievement obtained through academic learning process. The outcomes of learning process are manifested in various forms, such as the breadth and depth of knowledge, the expertise in specific science or skill, and grade or academic score. These learning outcomes, whether good or bad, are influenced by the efforts made by students in learning process. Students' efforts in learning process are influenced by various things comprising factors from both inside and outside the individuals. These factors can foster a person's spirit in learning so that it can affect his success. All of the factors are summed up in the so-called motivation. This is in line with a research conducted by Dishon-berkovits (2014) stating that the success of student learning is influenced by motivation.

Factors affecting student academic achievement may vary. The academic achievement of Latin immigrant families, for example, is directly influenced by risks encountered in the neighborhood, mother educational background and gender. Academic motivation becomes the link between parental monitoring and academic achievement index. Thus the parents are an influential factor, directly and indirectly, to the students' academic achievement. Furthermore, Hackett, Betz, Casas, & Rocha-Singh (1992) stated that self-efficacy is determined by expected outcomes, job interest, and low levels of stress. At the same time, self-efficacy, academic variables and other supporting factors give strong influence and serve as a predictor in academic achievement. In different case, according to Hope, Chavous, Jagers, & Sellers (2013), the identification of racial groups relates to the self-esteem and achievement of African students. This happens because the students are doing academic identification of their race. Academic identification here refers to the identity of a person and the role of a person as a student or learner in the academic realm; it is self-concept in learning motivation. Because the students identify themselves that they are from the same race and have the same roles as students, the self-concept in learning is also identically identified, which is later on affecting their academic achievement.

Former research on students' academic achievement is not only conducted in the sphere of the students' racial background but also extend to the academic discipline they are taking in the university. Diseth (2007), who conducted a study on academic achievement of the students of Psychology, states that the evaluation-perception of learning environments is related to student academic achievement. The perception of the learning environment emphasizes the overall response in the learning setting. The components are complementary, including evaluation of the quality of lecturers' teaching which is regarded as an important part of learning in the learning environment. It is considered relevant to the student's response to learning. It gives the possibility of increasing students' motivation and knowledge. Diseth & Martinsen (2010) add that approaches in learning can predict academic achievement, while learning styles and motivations have an indirect impact on students' achievement. Another study, conducted by Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker (2000), shows that consistency in reading, intellectual ability, and academic motivation are positively associated with academic success. This means the higher consistency, intellectual ability and academic motivation, the higher the academic success achieved by the student. In addition, according to Zupančič, Kavčič, Slobodskaya, & Akhmetova (2016), aspects that can predict academic success are the individuals who provide information and lessons at school, young age, and parents' high level of education, gender, and personality.

Beside the aforementioned factors, there are emotional factors that affect learning concentration and academic success. This is in line with the research of Fong Lam, Chen, Zhang, & Liang (2015) which states that academic emotion becomes the link between the sense of school belonging and academic achievement. Students who have higher sense of school belonging have more positive emotions which contributes to their academic success. Feelings of rejection at school can result in a negative impact on academic success. Furthermore, self-regulated learning and motivation mediate emotions in influencing students' success/academic achievement (Mega, Ronconi, & Beni, 2014).

The fact that there are numerous factors influencing the students' learning and academic achievement (that are found differently in different cases) has led us to conduct this study. Taking the context of the study on students' learning and academic achievement to local students, we focus on the aspects that support and inhibit students' learning concentration and academic achievement. In this case, we take the students of Faculty of Psychology Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang who are taking the last semester of their study as

the subjects. These students are chosen because the first writer of this study is teaching in Faculty of Psychology of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. Thus, it enables us to gather data and information effectively. The last semester students are targeted due to their experience and familiarity in academic activities and environment.

We believe that not all of the factors described in the aforementioned previous studies affect the concentration and success of students' learning process in the context of local students, particularly the students who are taking the discipline of Psychology in Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. Therefore, this study aims to determine the aspects that support and inhibit the students of Faculty of Psychology in Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang in terms of learning concentration and academic achievement.

## II. METHOD

This research employs quantitative research method. Population in this research is the students of Faculty of Psychology Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang who are taking the last semester of their study. The sampling technique used is simple random sampling with a total sample of 44 men and women. The data in this study are gathered by using open questionnaire. This open questionnaire consists of several open-ended questions related to learning activities (for example: "Mention and explain the things that make you passionate about learning").

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Supporting Aspects

The following table 1 shows the largest frequency that supports students' learning and academic achievement is supports from the closest people (family and friends), which is 20.5%. The next supporting aspects are the support from parents and clear objectives of study; both reach 15.9%. The third supporting aspects are parents' support and graduation deadline, as much as 11.4 % and ideals, study goals and targets in the future, as much as 11.5%. Meanwhile, the aspects that have smallest percentage, that is 2.3%, include: application of the courses, obstacles, overload assignments, type of course, the lecturer, unappealing lecture, and home atmosphere.

TABLE 1. SUPPORTING ASPECTS OF LEARNING CONCENTRATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Aspects	Frequency	Percentage
Supports from the closest people/family (Parents/brothers/sisters/friends)	9	20.5
Graduation deadline/urgency to graduate	4	9.1
Parents' supports and graduation deadline	5	11.4
Interesting lecture	4	9.1
Application of the courses, overload assignments, obstacles, urgency to graduate, self actualization	1	2.3
Objectives of study/ideals/targets	7	15.9
Parents' supports and objectives of study	7	15.9
Lecturer	1	2.3
Type of course	1	2.3
Perents' supports and type of course	1	2.3
Self psychological condition/mood	2	4.5
Unappealing lecture	1	2.3
Home athmosphere	1	2.3
TOTAL	44	100.0

The afore-mentioned findings, to some extents, are in line with a previous research (Abdulghani, *et al*, 2014) stating that there are some factors affecting academic success namely lecturing activity, immediate improvement, prioritizing learning needs, in-depth learning process, learning in small groups, mind mapping, skills of study in laboratory, patience in learning, learning from mistakes, time management, and family supports. Inner motivation and high expectation for positive exam results are essential to encourage students to maximize their academic performance. Managing the matters relating to non-academic activities, such as sleeping schedules, homesickness, language use and stress factor are also important in determining academic success. Regarding the roles of parents in boosting the students' achievement, the results of this study are also in line with Wilder's research results (2014), that parents' involvement has a positive correlation with academic achievement. The higher the support from parents, the higher the academic achievement is. The optimum level of students' academic achievement can be obtained when the parents provide social supports for the students, along with certain academic expectations. On the other hand, the minimum level of students' academic achievement can happen if the students' achievement is only defined by the success in doing homework or assignments.

Parents' involvement and supports for the students' academic activities are closely related with parenting models. Parenting models that contribute to the students' high academic achievement are those which focus on controlling and evaluating the students' learning activities, including parents' high academic expectation of the students, well-maintained parents-children communication on school activities, and parents' roles in developing reading habits. In addition, the achievement is also affected by family structure (students with two parents, single parent, or no parents) and the students' perceptions of school climate (O'Malley, *et al*, 2015). Liew, *et al*. (2014) adds that parental support for self-reliance and emotional self-regulation affects the students' adaptation and academic competence. The students' safety feelings and parents' demands on the successes reflected in the parents' control (strictness-supervision) can be regarded as *yin* and *yang* in parenting, which affects the academic success of the students without hurting their social-emotional or psychological happiness.

#### B. Inhibiting Aspects

Table 2 below shows the inhibiting aspects of the students' concentration and academic achievement. The most inhibiting aspects are the student's self conditions, both physical and psychological. They are physical health, fatigue, mood, laziness, sleepiness, procrastination, and environmental condition that constitute 9.1%. The second aspects, 6.8%, are unclear procedure of course implementation, non-academic activities (such as, being active in organization, dormitories, internships and assistance) and social media/gadget. The next aspects are external conflicts with others (friends or ex-boy/girlfriends), negative influence from friends (social loafing), overwhelming tasks, and poor time management. Each of them contributes up to 4.5%. The smallest percentage, which is 2.3%, includes for examples homesickness, lack of literature/lack of interest in reading, laziness and lack of concentration, gadget, etc.

TABLE II. INHIBITING ASPECTS OF LEARNING CONCENTRATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Unclear procedure of course implementation (assignment format, curriculum, lesson plan, inconsistent assignment instruction)	3	6.8
Difficult subjects and unclear procedures of course implementation	2	4.5
External conflicts with others (friends or ex-boy/girlfriends)	2	4.5
non-academic activities (such as, organization, dormitories, internships and assistance)	3	6.8

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Procrastination	4	9.1
Homesickness	1	2.3
Self conditions (health, sleepiness, fatigue, difficulties in understanding lectures, mood, forgetfulness, lack concentration)	4	9.1
Lack of literature/lack of interest in reading	1	2.3
Laziness and lack of concentration	1	2.3
Gadget and lack of concentration	1	2.3
Negative influence from friends/social loafing	2	4.5
Laziness and negative influence from friends/social loafing	1	2.3
Laziness and underestimating things	1	2.3
Overwhelming tasks	2	4.5
Poor time management	2	4.5
Environmental condition (crowded boarding house, reluctance to move from the comfort zone)	1	2.3
Laziness, sleepiness, and environmental condition	5	9.1
Laziness and lecturer factor	1	2.3
Unclear procedure of course implementation and lecturer factor	1	2.3
Laziness, social loafing, and self condition (difficulties in understanding subjects)	1	2.3
Boredom	1	2.3
social media/gadget	3	6.8
Self condition (forgetfulness, mood) and excessive wishes	1	2.3
Laziness and environmental condition	1	2.3
TOTAL	44	100.0

The fact that boredom and laziness are also factors that inhibit the students from achieving academic success confirms that the students' emotional condition plays an important role in determining academic success. This is in line with Pekrun, *et al.* research results (2014) stating that boredom has consistently and negatively impacted academic performance. Academic performance, the other way around, has consistently and negatively impacted boredom.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the aspects that support the concentration and academic achievement of the students Faculty of Psychology Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang are not as various as the inhibiting aspects. To be precise, it is 13 variants of supporting aspects compared to 24 variants of inhibiting aspects. This simple comparison signifies that the problems hindering the students in optimizing learning concentration and academic achievement are more complex. Nevertheless, given the fact that supports from the closest people and objectives of study play a very significant role in supporting the students' achievement (up to more than 20% and 15%), most problems can be avoided and, thus, overall inhibiting factors can be minimized to create greater probability for the students to achieve academic success.

The results of this study can be used for Faculty of Psychology Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang to create policies and activities that facilitate students to get supports from the closest people in their learning environment and minimize the emotional conditions that can disrupt the optimization of the students' academic achievement. One of the ways is by establishing learning groups of students who came from the same hometown and/or region, and in which joint learning activities and problems solving skills in learning are promoted.

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